

FACT SHEET: WHITE HOUSE LEGAL AID INTERAGENCY ROUNDTABLE RELEASES ITS FIRST ANNUAL REPORT TO THE PRESIDENT, [EXPANDING ACCESS TO JUSTICE, STRENGTHENING FEDERAL PROGRAMS](#)

Recognizing the power of legal aid, the members of the White House Legal Aid Interagency Roundtable (WH-LAIR) have been working together since 2012 to integrate legal aid into myriad federal programs, policies and initiatives. Co-chaired by the Attorney General and the Director of the White House Domestic Policy Council and staffed by the Department of Justice's (DOJ) Office for Access to Justice (ATJ), WH-LAIR has engaged federal grantees, legal aid providers and federal agency staff to raise awareness about how legal aid advances federal priorities.

Some of the highlights of the report issued to President Obama today include:

- **DOJ and Corporation for National and Community Service created [Elder Justice AmeriCorps](#) to help elder abuse victims**, the first-ever team of lawyers and paralegals to help victims of elder abuse. The program will support 300 AmeriCorps members throughout the country expected to serve more than 8,000 older adults over the next two years.
- **The Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) provided 21 [Juvenile Reentry Assistance Program](#) grants**, with funding from DOJ, to provide legal aid to eligible public housing residents under the age of 25, providing services such as assistance with expunging, sealing or correcting criminal records and supportive services to assist with mitigating and/or preventing collateral consequences.
- **Veteran Administration's (VA) Supportive Services for Veterans Families (SSVF) Program includes legal aid among the supportive services provided to veterans and their families with housing needs.** In an effort to improve very low-income veteran families' housing stability, SSVF grantees provide eligible families with outreach, case management and assistance in obtaining VA and other benefits. In 2015, over 30 percent of SSVF grantees provided legal aid to the veteran families they serve.
- **The Department of Labor's (DOL) new Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act's final rules for American Job Centers include legal aid among services that can be offered to help job seekers find employment.**
- **Department of Health and Human Services' Office of Child Support Enforcement (OCSE) includes legal aid and self-help resources to improve child support compliance.** OCSE plans to provide extensive training and technical assistance to state child support agencies, including opportunities to support self-help for certain legal needs, following the publication of their final rule to modernize the nation's child support program and increase its flexibility and efficiency in securing reliable support for families.
- **DOJ and Administrative Conference of the United States formed a Working Group on Self-Represented Parties in Administrative Hearings to explore best practices for self-represented parties.** Federal programs frequently interact with people in administrative

hearings that affect their most basic needs – establishing, maintaining or losing eligibility for food assistance, housing subsidies, medical care and other vital public benefits. Both for agencies and program beneficiaries, it is essential to ensure the fairness and accuracy of these administrative decisions, as well as to increase the efficiency of the procedures when possible.

- **DOJ, Federal Trade Commission and DOL credit their collaborations with legal aid for helping to shut down abusive practices** by car dealers and bogus “work-at-home” scammers, ensuring language access for injured low-income workers and court users, and ending discriminatory school discipline practices.
- **DOJ’s Civil Rights Division partners with legal aid and protection and advocacy programs in enforcement actions to protect the legal rights of people with disabilities.**
- **The Consumer Financial Protection Bureau developed a financial empowerment training toolkit for legal aid staff** entitled *[Your Money, Your Goals: A financial empowerment toolkit for legal aid organizations.](#)*
- **National Science Foundation’s (NSF) [Dear Colleague Letter](#) - Stimulating Research Related to the Use and Functioning of the Civil Justice System.** NSF’s outreach contributed to numerous and successful joint practitioner-researcher applications to NSF on a range of topics such as studying outcomes from self-help strategies and representation in housing and small claims courts.
- **The VA found through its Community Homelessness Assessment, Local Education and Networking Groups that [5 of the top 10 unmet needs of homeless veterans](#) involve legal assistance,** including: eviction/foreclosure prevention, child support issues, outstanding warrants/fines, discharge upgrades and restoring a driver’s license. Two other unmet needs – family reconciliation assistance and credit counseling – also often require legal assistance.
- **Over a dozen agencies are collaborating to identify national indicators consistent with the UN 2030 Agenda** for Sustainable Development’s call for the creation of international, regional, and national indicators for its goals. The Presidential Memorandum charged WH-LAIR to “assist the United States with implementation of Goal 16,” which recognizes that access to justice is essential to promoting peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development. The group is presently focusing on identifying national indicators for target 16.3, which calls on countries to “Promote the rule of law at the national and international levels and ensure equal access to justice for all.”
- **DOJ’s ATJ and National Institute of Justice, in collaboration with NSF, hosted a Civil Legal Aid Research Workshop,** which identified a research agenda on federal priorities at the intersection of civil legal aid, public safety and criminal justice, including human trafficking, consumer protection, elder abuse, domestic violence and reentry of formerly incarcerated individuals. The conveners published a [report](#) in 2016 summarizing the proceedings and the recommendations of the experts who attended.